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Leighton W. Rogers

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FUNCTIONS OF THE AERONAUTICAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LEIGHTON W. ROGERS*

I appreciate the honor of having the opportunity to talk with you today and I assure you that it is a pleasure to be with this group again containing as it does, so many good friends. As some of you may know, I have just returned from a trip to China in behalf of the aviation industry, where I was involved in a crack-up which broke a leg and for a couple of seconds the prospect of returning here did not appear very bright. I could see the old man in the white beard and night shirt about to make another pass at me with the sickle but he missed again.

I have not prepared anything to read, nor have I any formal speech worked up. I see by the program that I am supposed to address you on "The Functions of the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce." I would like to say that I do not know what they are, for the simple reason that since I have been the Executive of the Chamber, over a period of the last two years, I have not yet had time to find out what its original functions were. I repeat that I would like to say I don't know. Aviation has been involved in such a turmoil during that period that we have all had to jump in and scrap for what we believe to be right. I feel somewhat like the man who came home in the evening with his shirt front spattered with tobacco juice. His wife asked what on earth caused that and his reply was "Nothing serious darling. I have simply been in a nice little friendly poker game and I didn't dare turn my head to spit." We have not been playing poker with anybody but we have been fighting for what we believe to be sound and fair and right in aviation.

The Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York in 1919 and was formally organized with 100 charter members on December 31, 1921. Its functions, its objects and purposes can best be explained to you by quoting from Article I, Section 1, of the Constitution of the Chamber. I will read those paragraphs to you:

The objects and purposes of this organization are fully enumerated in its Certificate of Incorporation and are set forth as nearly as practicable in the

*Executive Vice-President, Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America, Inc.

language of the Membership Corporation law of the State of New York, the statute under which it was created. Stated generally, they are as follows:

(a) To provide an organization for the interchange of ideas, thoughts and suggestions concerning aeronautics in all its branches; to encourage the growth and understanding of all things pertaining to aeronautics, and to develop new and useful devices therein or auxiliary thereto; to perform all the functions properly pertaining to a Board of Trade in securing the healthy growth and use of aircraft as a means of commerce, of sport or pleasure, and to foster the development of the aircraft industry and kindred trades, so that there may be a flourishing and vigorous aircraft industry and trained personnel as a reserve for national defense.

(b) To provide an organization for the purpose of cooperating with the Government of the United States or any branch thereof when the welfare of the public and the industry can be served; to cooperate with the Federal, State, Municipal and foreign governments, or any organization engaged in the proper development of aeronautics, and to secure the enactment of proper laws affecting the same.

(c) To originate, collect, publish and disseminate ideas, thoughts and suggestions, relating to aeronautics, to coordinate as far as possible all efforts toward the dissemination of reliable aeronautical information, and to distribute among its members information concerning the standing of members, or of persons, firms or corporations engaged in similar lines of business.

(d) To organize, manage, direct or sanction aeronautical expositions, exhibitions or flying meets.

(e) To procure uniformity in the customs and usages of trade and commerce among its members and all persons, firms or corporations having a common trade, business or professional interest in aeronautics; to reform, correct and adjust any and all abuses which may arise relative thereto.

(f) To arbitrate, adjust and settle any and all differences which may arise among its members or between its members and other persons, firms or corporations.

(g) To acquire and dispose of such property as the purposes of the corporation shall require, subject always to such limitations as are prescribed by law.

These functions can with a fair degree of accuracy be summarized under three main heads. They are (1) the promotion of aviation; (2) the coordination and assembly of thought in the aviation industry for use before the public and before various groups in the United States Government; and (3) the headquarters of self-government within the industry.

In my opinion the first function, that of promotion of aviation, is the most important and the one on which the Association should spend most of its efforts. Until two years ago, this was the case. For twelve years the Chamber had been the medium for group effort in a continuous cooperative movement for the development of

American aeronautics. For twelve years the Chamber had taken an active part in each constructive movement seeking the advancement of flying. In nearly every instance the Chamber was the leader in such movement. Two years ago, however, circumstances confronting the industry forced a shift in the pursuit of its functions. The problem arose of regulation of the industry through the National Recovery Administration. The Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce became the spokesman for the manufacturing phase of the industry and the air transport phase of the industry for the National Recovery Administration and became the headquarters of the Code Authority to be established to carry out the N. R. A. policies. This involved us in a tremendous amount of work which took time, effort and money.

In addition, beginning two years ago, the industry found itself under repeated attacks from various groups within the United States Government. Inasmuch as the government is in both main phases of air transport and manufacturing, the best customer of the industry, the industry cannot put itself in a position of fighting the government. It was put to a tremendous amount of effort to coordinate and assemble the facts and its interpretation of the problems so that they could be made available to Congress and various government departments in these investigations wherever the opportunity was given. Where the opportunity for presentation of facts was not given, the only recourse to the industry was to rely upon the fairness of the American public and the fairness of those who have the interests of aviation at heart.

During the past two years the industry has been the subject of investigation by fifteen major governmental committees or groups. The industry has itself, through the Association, conducted eighteen major meetings, involving intensive preparation and involving travel from all parts of the United States to New York, Chicago and Washington, on matters for the Code for the Air Transport phase of the industry, which finally was established and became law. During the same time, thirty-five such major meetings were required in the attempt to negotiate a fair code for the manufacturing phase of the industry. Sharp differences of opinion between the industry and the N. R. A. resulted and no Code had been agreed upon up until the time of the Supreme Court decision ruling the N. R. A. unconstitutional. Further, during this period of two years some 230 separate pieces of legislation affecting aviation were introduced in Congress. These had to be studied and contents made available to the industry and the opinions about

them of the industry coordinated and assembled. A slightly more detailed analysis of this storm of legislation shows that 54 of these bills indirectly affected air transport and 41 directly affected that phase of the industry. 38 had to do with Army and Navy aviation. 13 affected the manufacturers of aircraft, aircraft engines and aircraft accessories. 21 of these bills covered miscellaneous phases of aeronautics.

All work involving in proper handling in behalf of the industry of this mass of activities affecting it coming from the United States Government made it impossible for the Association to give much attention to its most important function—that of promotion of aviation.

Perhaps the most constructive step in all of this activity was the appointment by the President of the Federal Aviation Commission under the chairmanship of the Honorable Clark Howell. This group conducted impartial and patient hearings covering all phases of aviation within the scope of its appointment mandate and issued a report containing recommendations which is certain, because of its fairness, constructive approach and clarity of expression to be a land mark in contemporary aviation history. Its recommendations were incorporated in legislation which was introduced in Congress. The legislation was not finally passed. A combination of circumstances slowed its progress through the legislative mill. Perhaps we all hoped for too much in the excitement of times, but in any event the work of the Federal Aviation Commission and the legislation which arose out of it is by no means dead.

All groups interested in aviation were given the opportunity of appearing before the Federal Aviation Commission and to present testimony and suggestions. The Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce presented its recommendations. The Association of State Aviation Officials presented its recommendations. One of the most gratifying outgrowths of this work was the completely frank and open discussion of aviation problems by the members of the five or six leading organizations having an interest in aviation. There was no secrecy on any of the recommendations. It seemed only natural that a coordinating committee, made up of two representatives from each of these organizations, should be formed for the purpose of studying each others recommendations to bring about agreement where possible and preferably to define the differences of opinion where they existed. One of the leading organizations on this coordinating committee was your organization—

the Association of State Aviation Officials, under the able leadership of Fred Smith. The Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce had the honor to be represented on this coordinating committee and to provide facilities in Washington for its work. The constructive work of that committee was, let me repeat, to me one of the most encouraging results of all the activity in aviation for the past two years and I have strong hopes that your organization this year will see fit to continue being represented on such a committee, so that it can be made even more effective.

Let us look at the future. Industry has been promised a breathing spell. To date our breathing spell contains at least four more investigations by Committees of Congress. Some of these are constructive and some have doubtful possibilities. Provided it will be given a fair chance to state its case, the industry has nothing to fear from these investigations.

There are reasons to believe that the storm which has settled over the aviation world in the last two years is clearing up. New air mail legislation has been passed which may or may not be perfect but under which the air transport industry can operate. All kinds of traffic on the air lines is increasing. The difficulties which arose out of the interpretations of the Army and Navy program law are being cleared away. Orders for new service aircraft are being placed in the industry and the factory wheels are beginning to turn again. Thus the future is brighter for the two major phases of the industry.

There is still much to be done in the third major phase of aviation—that of private flying. The industry has tried to solve this problem at a cost of millions of dollars. It has not been able despite its best efforts to arrive at a solution which could be considered complete or ideal. The industry feels that the growth of private flying and the production of an airplane which will promote that growth is a matter of time and perhaps slow progress on a wide but coordinated front. There appears to be no single remedy and no single gadget which will solve it. There is no doubt, however, that it is this phase of aviation which intrigues us and wherein lies perhaps the greatest field for future new developments. In my reading recently I came across the views of a great literary figure of years ago, before heavier-than-air flying was ever considered possible, which pointed out what to be were hitherto unexpressed uses to which flying could be put. I quote from the writings of Joseph Addison, the great English essayist who lived 1672-1719. In connection with a discussion of the possibilities

of flying, Mr. Addison said: "It would fill the world with innumerable immoralities, and give such occasions for intrigues as people cannot meet with who have nothing but legs to carry them. You would have a couple of lovers make a midnight assignation upon the top of the monument, and see the cupola of St. Pauls covered with both sexes like the outside of a pigeon house. Nothing would be more frequent than to see a beau flying in at a garret window, or a gallant giving chase to his mistress like a hawk after a lark." I submit these words of Mr. Addison to those who are working to develop private flying as perhaps an added incentive to their efforts!

What is our program for the coming year? As I stated at the beginning of my talk I have just returned from the Far East and have not yet had the opportunity to consult with my committees which decide policies for the Aeronautical Chamber. Meetings of these committees will be held in the near future and decisions will be made as to our program for the new year. I hope that when the time comes we will have the opportunity to sit down with representatives of your group and discuss these plans. You may be sure that we will seek that opportunity and that there will be no secrets.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done in the air transport phase of the industry. There is the promotion of safety. In this we are going to have the help of Senator Copeland's Committee. There is a large field for the promotion of traffic on the air lines. I personally feel that the air lines must, in addition to their company advertising, at some time embark upon a cooperative air transport advertising campaign in magazines and newspapers. With regard to the air forces of the country, I believe that there is a need for educational work with the public as to the vital necessity of adequate air defense and air power. I have been appalled to learn that there are in this country active groups of people who if they had their way would reduce this country as far as protecting itself in international emergencies to the position of Ethiopia or China.

The Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America, Inc., has never been stronger than it is now. Its membership in the industry embraces well over ninety per cent in each of the major phases of manufacturing and air transport. The individual members in the industry have, through force of circumstances, had to discuss their common problems. Agreement has been reached in many instances heretofore considered impossible. The differences of opin-

ion have been clearly brought out and where agreement was impossible have been clearly defined. Some people have decried the existence of these differences of opinion. Different people have different ideas on these differences of opinion to decry. I have one hope that the day will never come when there will be no differences of opinion in the aviation industry, for it will mean that progress is dead. It is differences of opinion which make a horse race.

It is significant to me that nearly all of us involved in aviation, including the United States Government, the industry, the states and others, are really working for the same thing—the advancement of aviation. It is my aim to have the Aeronautical Chamber give the opportunity to work with all friends of aviation towards that common end.